implemented by the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation.

[Translation]

Biotechnology for Farmers

4900. SHRI MAHESH KUMAR M. KANODIA : Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Biotechnology of India is under the control of multinational companies and which is not in the interests of farmers;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to ensure that the benefits of Bio-technology reaches to the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) and (b) No Sir.

(c) The Department of Biotechnology is implementing a number of programmes for the benefit of farmers. These are : Biofertilizers, Biocontrol agents, Sericulture, Aquaculture, Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Use of Embroy transfer technology, etc. Special biotechnology based programmes for SC/ST are focussed for target groups. Training, employment generation activities, awareness and education, large scale demonstration in the farmers field and health interventions are all aimed at ensuring the benefits of biotechnology for the farmers.

[English]

Land Fertility

4901. SHRI B.L. SHANKAR : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether excessive use of chemicals and fertilizers reduces the fertility of land;

(b) if so, whether foreign countries have curtailed the use of chemicals and fertilizers to maintain the fertility of land;

(c) whether the Government have made or propose to make any study in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) Excessive use of fertilizers may lead to imbalance of nutrients in the soil. Consumption of fertilizer nutrients being about 75 kg. per ha. in India cannot be termed as excessive use. With regard to chemical pesticides also there are no reports about their reducing the fertility of the land.

(b) The fertilizer consumption in the World has declined during past few years. Increase in the cost and environmental considerations are among important reasons for the declining trend. With regard to chemical pesticides, however, there is no decline in the consumption.

(c) to (e) In view of the above, no study has been instituted in this regard.

Safety of Yamuna Water

4902. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the report of the Washington based International Food Policy Research Institute as published in the 'Hindustan Times', dated March 10, 1997 to the effect that Yamuna water in Delhi is dangerously polluted containing caliform count of 25 million organism per 100 millilitres and that Yamuna water leaving New Delhi received 200 million litres of untreated sewage water per day;

(b) if so, the Government's independent assessment about safety of Yamuna water for the National Capital region; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken for supplying safe drinking water to people in the capital?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) Yes, Sir. According to investigations carried out by the Central Pollution Control Board, the average coliform count in the Yamuna water along Delhi is around 3.5 lakhs per 100 millilitres. This is due to the discharge of untreated/partially treated sewage of Delhi.

(b) The Yamuna water will be safe only if all the sewage generated from Delhi is fully treated to the discharge standards prescribed by the Central Pollution Control Board and a minimum flow is maintained in the river to dilute the effect of pollution.

(c) In order to provide potable water to the people of Delhi, raw water from the river Yamuna is drawn for treatment upstream of the Wazirabad Barrage which is not polluted. The drinking water supplied to the people of Delhi by the Delhi Water Supply and Sewage Disposal Undertaking of the Government of National Capital Territory